Sabha on 07.04.2003. It is planned to make the existing inspection and monitoring systems more scientific as detailed in above para by importing modern technology for inspection and assessment of condition of bridges by using.

(i) Under water Inspections.

(ii) Mapping unknown foundations and integrity testing of foundations.

(iii) Non-Destructive Testing Techniques like Ultra Sonics, Acoustic Emission, Strain Gauging and Radar etc.

(iv) Fatigue life and residual life assessment techniques.

(v) Modern Bridges Management System.

Pilot projects for items (i) to (v) of above activities have been sanctioned. Purchase of Non-destructive testing equipment has been sanctioned for setting up of mobile testing laboratories over 9 Zonal Railways at a cost of 12.7 crores this year.

Suicide by farmers in Andhra Pradesh

*87. DR. DASARI NARAYANA RAO: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) number of farmers who committeed suicide due to crop loss or indebtedness in Andhra Pradesh during the last three years, year-wise and district-wise; and

(b) what steps Government have taken or propose to take to ensure that hapless farmers do not resort to this extreme step in State and rest of the country?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI RAJNATH SINGH): (a) and (b) 1. According to the information made available by the State Government of Andhra Pradesh the number of farmers who committed suicide due to crop loss or indebtedness in Andhra Pradesh during the last three years is indicated in the Statement enclosed (*See* below)

2. The Reserve Bank of India in consultation with the Government

has issued Standing Guidelines for providing relief to the farmers in areas affected by natural calamities. These guidelines, *inter alia*, include the following measures:—

(i) Convert/reschedule loans in the event of natural calamity for period ranging from 3 to 9 years depending upon the successive crop failure/intensity of damage of crops

(ii) Grant fresh crop loans to affected farmers.

(iii) Convert principal as well as interest due on the existing loans.

(iv) Grant of consumption loans.

(v) Not to compound interest in respect of loans converted/ reschedules.

(vi) Not to charge penal interest in respect of current dues in default.

3. In addition, the RBI/NABARD has advised the banks to extend specific credit related relief measures to the drought-affected farmers of the country following the announcement made by the Hon'ble Prime Minister on 14th November, 2002. These measures include the following:—

(a) There should be no recovery of any amount either by way of principal or interest during the current financial year in respect of Kharif (2002) crop loan.

(b) the principal amount of crop loan should be converted into term loan and will be recovered over a period of minimum five years in the case of small and marginal farmers and four years in the case of other farmers (as against three years stipulated in the existing guidelines).

(c) Interest due in the current financial year on crop loan should also be deferred. No interest should be charged on the deferred interest.

In order to further mitigate the hardship of farmers in the drought affected States, the first year's deferred liability of interest on Kharif loans has been waived as a one time measure.

4. The Government of India is also implementing the "National Agricultural Insurance Scheme" under which eligible farmers are entitled to receive compensation for crop loss due to natural calamities.

5. Agriculture input subsidy under Central Relief Fund (CRF) is admissible for loss of crop due to natural calamities.

Statement

Number of farmers who committed suicide due to crop loss or indebtedness in Andhra Pradesh during the last three years, year-wise and district-wise

A total number of 541 suicides by farmers were reported from 2000 to 2002, the district-wise details are given below:—

Name of the District	Year 2000		Year 2001		Year 2002	
	Crop Failure	Indebted-ness	Crop Failure	Indebted-ness	Crop Failure	Indebted-ness
Khammam	1	5	0	2	5	2
Karimnagar	5	14	38	2	2	30
Rangareddy	1	5	0	0	0	0
Nalgonda	5	5	10	0	3	2
Warangal	20	22	55	4	7	57
Prakasam	1	2	1	0	1	1
Ananthapur	25	10	1	9	12	15
Nizamabad	3	2	0	0	2	5
Medak	3	3	2	7	1	2
Mahabubnagar	4	11	5	4	0	3
Krishna	4	2	0	0	2	3
Guntur	3	1	1	2	1	5
Adilabad	3	10	18	5	3	10

Name of the District	Year 2000		Year 2001		Year 2002	
	Crop Failure	Indebted-ness	Crop Failure	Indebted-ness	Crop Failure	Indebted-ness
Chittoor	1	2	0	0	1	2
Kurnool	0	3	7	1	1	1
Srikakulam	-	-	0	0	1	2
Vizianagaram	-	-	0	0	-	-
Visakhapatnam	-	-	0	0	-	-
East Godavari	-	-	0	0	-	-
West Godavari	-	-	0	0	0	1
Nellore	-	-	0	0	2	1
Kadapa	-	-	0	0	1	4
TOTAL:	79	97	138	36	45	146

Foodgrain production in Punjab

*92. SHRI N.R. DASARI:
SHRI V.V. RAGHAVAN:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Punjab farmers have shifted from the traditional wheat and rice cultivation to more lucrative crops such as castorseed in large scale;

(b) if so, what are the incentives being given by the Punjab Government for such shifting of crops; and

(c) what is the estimated reduction in the foodgrain production during this year?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI RAJNATH SINGH): (a) In Punjab State the shift from wheat and rice to the other lucrative crops such as castorseed, guar, basmati and maize covers a very small area.

(b) No incentive are being given to the farmers by the Punjab Government for this shifting.

(c) There will be no reduction in the production of foodgrains due to this shifting because maize and basmati are food grain crops and